

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as indicated below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for a first class mail piece tracking provider to provide, to a plurality of users, tracking of individual outbound first class mail pieces using a computer-based postage system, said method comprising:
 - receiving, from a postal authority, a plurality of mailing subscriber identifiers assigned by the postal authority to the first class mail piece tracking provider, ~~the mailing subscriber identifier corresponding to the first class mail piece tracking provider~~, the plurality of mailing subscriber identifiers corresponding to an authorization by the postal authority for tracking first class mailings by the first class mail piece tracking provider;
 - receiving, from a particular user of the plurality of users of the first class mail piece tracking provider, a request to mail a particular first class mail piece to a delivery address, wherein the request from the particular user to mail the particular first class mail piece comprises an indication by the particular user to provide tracking of the particular first class mail piece;
 - determining a delivery address identifier corresponding to the delivery address;
 - identifying from the plurality of mailing subscriber identifiers, a next available mailing subscriber identifier;
 - identifying a next available mailing identifier;
 - modifying at least one of the next available mailing subscriber identifier and determining a the next available mailing identifier, for which until determining a combination of a destination tracking service type, the next available mailing subscriber identifier, the next available mailing identifier, and the delivery address

identifier corresponding to the delivery address, that would trackably identify the particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time;

assigning a first class mail piece tracking identifier to the particular first class mail piece, wherein the first class mail piece tracking identifier trackably identifies the particular first class mail piece during the particular period of time, and wherein the first class mail piece tracking identifier comprises the destination tracking service type, the next available mailing subscriber identifier, the next available mailing identifier, and the delivery address identifier; and

relating the first class mail piece identifier to the particular user of the plurality of users.

2. (Currently Amended) The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 1, said method further comprising:

encoding the first class mail piece identifier as a graphic symbology; and
fixing the ~~[[the]]~~ first class mail piece identifier graphic symbology in a visual ~~mediamedium~~ medium.

3. (Currently Amended) The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 2, said method further comprising:

physically associating the first class mail piece identifier graphic symbology fixed in the visual ~~mediamedium~~ medium with the particular first class mail piece.

4. (Currently Amended) The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 2, said method further comprising:

receiving from the postal authority, a plurality of electronic mail piece identifier representations, each electronic mail piece identifier representation of the plurality of electronic mail piece identifier representations corresponding to one scanned first class mail piece identifier of a plurality of scanned first class mail piece identifiers; ~~[[and]]~~

receiving from the particular user a request for tracking information regarding the particular first class mail piece;

retrieving from searching the plurality of electronic mail piece identifier representations[[,]]for an electronic mail piece identifier that matches the first class mail piece identifier that uniquely trackably identifies the particular first class mail piece; and

for an electronic mail piece identifier that matches the first class mail piece identifier that trackably identifies the particular first class mail piece, reporting to the particular user tracking information associated with the electronic mail piece identifier.

5. (Previously Presented) The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 1 wherein the first class mail piece identifier further comprises:

a service type.

6. (Original) The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 5 wherein the delivery address identifier is obtained from Internet-based postage delivery address information.

7. (Previously Presented) The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 1, the method further comprising:

encoding the first class mail piece identifier as a machine-readable bar code; and

printing the machine-readable bar code as a label for the particular first class mail piece.

8. (Currently Amended) A method for printably rendering a trackable unique mail piece identifier graphic symbology, said method ~~unique mail piece identifier graphic symbology~~ comprising:

[[an]]encod[[ed]]ing a destination tracking service type;

[[an]]encod[[ed]]ing a mailing subscriber identifier corresponding to a mailing subscriber identifier of a plurality of mailing subscriber identifiers assigned by a postal authority to a first class mail piece tracking provider, wherein [[the]]each mailing subscriber identifier of the plurality of mailing subscriber identifiers corresponds to an authorization by the postal authority for tracking first class mailings by the first class mail piece tracking provider;

[[an]]encod[[ed]]ing a mailing identifier, the encoded mailing identifier comprising an encoding of a mailing identifier corresponding to a particular user of a plurality of users of the first class mail piece tracking provider; [[and]]

[[an]]encod[[ed]]ing a delivery address identifier corresponding to a delivery address to which [[[a]]]the particular user ~~of the first class mail piece tracking provider~~ has requested destination tracking of a particular first class mail piece, wherein a combination of the encoded destination tracking service type, the encoded mailing subscriber identifier, the encoded mailing identifier, and the encoded delivery address identifier corresponding to the delivery address, comprises a first class mail piece tracking identifier that trackably identifies [[[a]]]the particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time and that is associated with the particular user.

9. (Currently Amended) The method ~~unique mail piece identifier graphic symbology~~ of Claim 8, said method ~~unique mail piece identifier graphic symbology~~ further comprising:

[[an]]encod[[ed]]ing a service type identifier; and

wherein the ~~encoded~~ delivery address identifier is trackably unique during a particular period of time, within a combination of the encoded service type identifier, the encoded mailing subscriber identifier and the encoded mailing identifier.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of encoding a trackable first class[[s]] mail piece identifier as a graphic symbology, said method comprising:

receiving a request by a particular user of a plurality of users of a computer-based postage provider to print computer-based postage for a particular first class mail piece for mailing the particular first class mail piece to a particular delivery address;

assigning a tracking identifier to correspond to the particular user and to trackably correspond to the particular first class mail piece, wherein the tracking identifier trackably identifies the particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time, wherein the tracking identifier comprises a mailing subscriber identifier corresponding to the computer-based postage provider, a mailing identifier, and a delivery address identifier, wherein the delivery address identifier is trackably unique within a combination of the mailing subscriber identifier and the mailing identifier during a period of time, and wherein the mailing subscriber identifier corresponds to an authorization by the postal authority for tracking first class mailings by ~~a first class mail piece tracking~~ the computer-based postage provider; [[and]]

encoding the tracking identifier as a graphic symbology;

saving in a memory storage a relationship between the tracking identifier and the particular user.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of encoding a unique mail piece identifier as a graphic symbology of Claim 10, said method further comprising:
relating the tracking identifier to the user.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of encoding a unique mail piece identifier as a graphic symbology of Claim 11, wherein encoding the tracking identifier as a graphic symbology comprises encoding the tracking identifier as a machine-readable bar code.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for tracking individual outbound first class mail pieces, said method comprising:

receiving a postage printing request from a particular ~~mailer~~user of a plurality of users using a computer-based postage provider, said postage printing request comprising a request ~~[[to]]~~for computer-based postage indicia for mailing ~~[[mail]]~~ a particular first class mail piece to a delivery address, wherein the request from the particular user to mail the particular first class mail piece comprises an indication by the particular user to provide tracking of the particular first class mail piece;

determining a delivery address identifier corresponding to the delivery address; ~~[[and]]~~

formulating a next available first class mail piece identifier for which a combination of a destination tracking service type, a mailing subscriber identifier corresponding to an authorization by a governmental postal authority for tracking first class mailings, the next available first class mail piece identifier, and the delivery address identifier corresponding to the delivery address, would trackably identify the particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time; and storing an association between the particular user and the combination.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 13, said method further comprising:

encoding the next available first class mail piece identifier as a graphic symbology.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 14 wherein the graphic symbology is a one-dimensional bar-code.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 14, said method further comprising:
printing the graphic symbology.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 16, said method further comprising:

printing computer-based postage indicium indicia in accordance with the postage printing request.

18. (Currently Amended) A method using a computer-based postage system for printing a trackable first class mail piece identifier for a first class mail piece, said method comprising:

printing computer-based postage indicium indicia for a particular first class mail piece in accordance with a postage printing request by a particular user of a plurality of users of the computer-based postage system, wherein the postage printing request comprises a delivery address; [[and]]

~~printing~~generating a first class mail piece tracking identifier for the particular first class mail piece, wherein the first class mail piece tracking identifier comprises: a mailing subscriber identifier corresponding to an authorization by a governmental postal authority for tracking first class mailings, a mailing identifier, and a delivery address identifier corresponding to the delivery address, wherein the delivery address is trackably unique within a combination of the subscriber identifier and the mailing identifier during a particular period of time;

storing a set of information relating the first class mail piece tracking identifier to the particular user; and

printing the first class mail piece tracking identifier.

Claims 19-20. Cancelled.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the computer-based postage indicium indicia is printed on a first label and wherein the first class mail piece tracking identifier is printed on a second label.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the computer-based postage indicium indicia and the first class mail piece tracking identifier are printed on an envelope.

23. (Currently Amended) A method for retrieving a trackable first class mail piece identifier using a computer-based postage system, said method comprising:

retrieving, from a plurality of electronic first class mail piece identifier representations, an electronic first class mail piece identifier representation that matches a particular first class mail piece identifier that trackably identifies a particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time and that corresponds to a particular user of a plurality of users of the computer-based postage system; and

reporting to the particular user a set of tracking information associated with the electronic first class mail piece identifier representation.

24. (Currently Amended) A method for tracking individual outbound first class mail pieces using a computer-based postage system, said method comprising:

assigning a composite confirm identifier to a particular first class mail piece according to input by a particular mailer of a plurality of mailers that use the computer-based postage system, wherein said composite confirm identifier trackably identifies the particular mail piece during a particular period of time;

[[and]]

relating the composite confirm identifier for the particular first class mail piece to ~~[[a]]~~the particular mailer;

receiving a scanning event about the composite confirm identifier scanned by a postal authority; and

reporting the scanning event to the particular mailer.

25. (New) The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 1, wherein the modifying step comprises:

testing a first combination of a destination tracking service type, the next available mailing subscriber identifier, the next available mailing identifier, and the delivery address identifier corresponding to the delivery address, to

determine whether the first combination would trackably identify the particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time;

for a first combination that would not trackably identify the particular first class mail piece during the particular period of time, repeating the following steps until a combination is determined that would trackably identify the particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time:

incrementing the next available mailing identifier until a maximum mailing identifier is exceeded or until the combination of the destination tracking service type, the next available mailing subscriber identifier, the next available mailing identifier, and the delivery address identifier, would trackably identify the particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time, whichever occurs first;

if the maximum mailing identifier is exceeded before the combination would trackably identify the particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time, then:

selecting from the plurality of mailing subscriber identifiers a further next available mailing subscriber identifier;

determining a next available mailing identifier; and

testing a further combination of a destination tracking service type, the further next available mailing subscriber identifier, the next available mailing identifier, and the delivery address identifier corresponding to the delivery address, to determine whether the further combination would trackably identify the particular first class mail piece during a particular period of time.